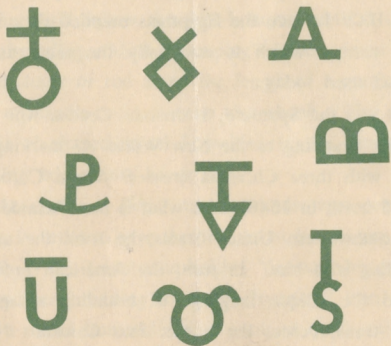


BRANDS

and how
to read them



With the compliments of
SICKS' LETHBRIDGE BREWERY LTD.

HOW CATTLE BRANDING BEGAN



The cattle mill and bawl, the irons heat among the glowing coals — and there's enough work ahead to make a cowman wish he had six hands! It's branding time — a scene repeated all over Alberta today, and one which could just as easily have taken place 2,000 years B.C. In fact, the Egyptians branded their stock in a manner which is essentially the same as the method used today .

It was the Spaniard, Hernando Cortez, who first brought branding to the New World — marking his stock with three Christian crosses. When Coronado moved north in 1540, from what is now Mexico into the southwestern United States, he took the art of branding with him. In turn, the American ranchers spread the unique language of branding along the cattle trails, across the border into Canada's North

The material and illustrations herein contained concerning registered brands only, have been obtained from public records of the Province of Alberta, and are included herein because of the general interest in them.

West Territories and what is now Alberta.

At roundup time, each owner's stock must be separated, and the past year's crop of calves found and branded. The brand, and more important, the location of that brand on a "critter" marks one man's cows from another's. And naturally, when sure identification can mean money in your jeans, the brand must be clean and readable.

Today the majority of Alberta's farmers and ranchers still follow the time-honored method of hot iron branding. Most "stamping" irons consist of a metal shank or rod about the length of a man's arm, with a handle twisted from the shank. The actual brand of shaped metal is welded to the shank. Its burning edge must be square.

At one time, large outsize brands were common. Now, in order to save the hide, most brands are fairly small — 3 to 5 inches in height. You may have heard of another branding tool, the "running" iron. This was a round iron rod with a hook or quick curve on the end. It made a convenient and cheap method for "drawing" a brand. The "running" iron also made brand-forging easy for the rustler, and is now strictly illegal in Alberta .

HOW TO READ BRANDS



Reading a brand is a matter of knowing the symbols used, and what they are called. Many of these are simply ordinary letters or figures. Other common symbols used in Alberta are named and shown on the following pages, together with examples of the way in which they are used.

In most cases, a brand is read from top to bottom, or from left to right. The right direction is usually made clear by the brand itself. Thus **R≡** is clearly a "left to right" brand, "R Three Bars." **⋈** would be read from the top down, "Half Diamond X." Some brands are a combination of "top to bottom" and "left to right," e.g.: **⌣** "Quarter Circle A F Connected."

Although some ranchers prefer to name their brands according to their own personal interpretation, the methods and terms found in this booklet are those in most common use.

Alberta BAR U brand of the Northwest Cattle Co., now owned by J. Allen Baker, High River.

RUNNING BAR P REVERSE D brand of Rex R. McLean of High River. Could be read as the RUNNING BAR P D.

The CROSS O brand of S. R. Orr of Fort Macleod, also known as the CROSS HANGING O brand.

R. E. DeWitt of Airdrie owns the REVERSE D IN A CIRCLE, sometimes called simply CIRCLE D.

The Alberta Livestock Co-op Ltd., owners of this O SLASH O brand, call it the "Percentage Brand."


BAR

Perhaps the best-known branding term for a short dash about 3 to 4 inches long. However, its very simplicity invites strike-over or re-designing by rustlers.


RUNNING BAR

A horizontal bar located on either side of additional characters: e.g. —O—, "Running Bar Circle Running Bar." It can be registered on the ribs only. To some extent it replaces the U.S.A. rancher's "Rail" symbol.



Oh

This is the letter o, a small, round circle which may be combined with other letters or numerals. The "mashed oh" or "goose egg"  of U.S.A. ranchers is not in general use in Alberta.

CIRCLE

Larger than the letter o, and as close as possible to a perfect circle . In most cases the circle is used to enclose some other character of the brand.

SLASH

An upright bar, leaning to the right or left: e.g.  or .



The **Q U A R T E R CIRCLE A F** CONNECTED brand of Albert and Fred Elhard, Crossfield.



The old George Emerson **ANCHOR P**, now known as the **ROCKING P** brand of Rocking P Ranch Ltd., Nanton.



T H A N G I N G S is the old brand of Guy Weadick of Calgary Stampede fame, now owned by Stampede Ranch Ltd., Longview.




The **BAR H H** CONNECTED brand is owned by Bar H Ranches Ltd., of Calgary.




The Blood Indians of Cardston's **LAZY B** brand goes back a long way in Alberta history.


QUARTER or HALF CIRCLES

These are curves, e.g.  not attached to any other letters or characters. In Alberta, it is common to say "quarter circle" even when the arc actually forms a half-circle.


ROCKING LETTERS

When a letter is placed so that the bottom touches the inside of a curve, it is said to be "rocking," e.g. . (In Alberta sometimes called an "anchor.")



HANGING LETTERS

When one symbol is placed below another and connected to it — that is, "hanging" from it, e.g. . This is the Alberta term for what U.S.A. ranchers call "swinging" letters.

CONNECTED LETTERS

These are letters or symbols joined together, e.g.  and not otherwise designated as either "hanging" or "rocking." The old-timers might call this a "monogram."

LAZY LETTERS

Any letter which lies on its side, e.g.  is called "lazy." In Alberta, this can also apply to letters which slant, e.g.  (known in the U.S.A. as "tumbling" letters).



Running M Ranches
Ltd. of Airdrie brand
with a RUNNING M.



One of Alberta's walk-
ing brands — J. R.
Airth of DeWinton's
WALKING A.



Harold Hunt of En-
diang runs a FLYING
O brand on his stock.



R. M. Broomfield of
Stavely owns this P
ON A BENCH brand;
while J. Robertson of
Midnapore runs the
BOX E CONNECTED.




Glenbow Ranches
Ltd., Calgary, is
registered with the
DIAMOND AND A
HALF.




The HALF DIAMOND
ELEVEN is the brand
of P. A. Norman of
Calgary.


RUNNING LETTERS

Letters with curving flares and rounded angles are said to be "running," e.g. .


WALKING LETTERS

Letters to which "feet" have been added are said to be "walking," e.g. .


FLYING LETTERS

Letters with "wings" added to the top left and right, e.g. .



BOX, BLOCK or BENCH

These characters are self-explanatory, being boxes, rectangles or half-characters. A "bench" formed vertically can be called an "Open E," e.g. .

DIAMOND

This character is also self-explanatory: . It has long been a very popular brand symbol.

HALF DIAMOND

When only half a diamond is shown:  or . In U.S.A. parlance, it may be known as a "rafter," but this term is not common in Alberta. A smaller angle without a horizontal bar is called an "Open A."



Alberta brand of P. A. Minor of Brooks, called the T TRIANGLE.



TRIANGLE

Another of the geometric characters used in branding. This term, of course, is also self-explanatory:






One of Alberta's rare "linked" brands—J. W. Bowman of Calgary's THREE LINKS.






LAPPED or LINKED CHARACTERS

Two interlocking circles or ovals  are said to be "Lapped." If they barely touch , they can be called "Linked."

ARBITRARY BRANDS





In addition to traditional letter and numeral brands, there are many others known as "arbitrary" brands. They may also be called "character" or "picture" brands. Alberta's cow-ography is the richer for them — and while reading them depends almost entirely on the owner's interpretation, some are easy to identify — as for example when W.J. Perrott of Stavely marks his stock with a . It's obvious what W. C. Bell of Claresholm had in mind when he registered his ; and why S. C. Hartt of Hanna uses a  brand. Ray Bagley of Coleman was


following an old tradition of the west, when he started using the  "Pig Pen" brand. One of the old-time brands now owned by Billy Holtman of Taber is the  "Ship Wheel"; and the George Church brand of Balzac is a simple rendering of  "The Battle Axe." George Ross' old "Hat" brand  is still in use; and there's no need to guess why G. B. Brown of Byemoor calls his  the "House" brand.


SOME OLD-TIME ALBERTA BRANDS


Some of these famous old-time brands follow the "rules" of brand reading — others are "arbitrary." The names of present or former registered owners are given.


 "Flying E" of George Lane, one of the Big Four founders of the Calgary Stampede.


 "WR" brand of the Waldron Ranch, ranging in the Porcupine Hills and North Fork.


 "Lazy H" brand run by the Oxley Ranch of Fort Macleod.

 The Reverse N L brand of the late Senator Patrick Burns, pioneer rancher and meat-packer.

 John Quirk's famous "Q" brand on the Sheep Creek range.






 Old "Circle" brand run by the Benton Cattle Co. of Lethbridge.

 John Ware's "Nine Hundred and Ninety-Nine" brand, sometimes called the "Three Walking Sticks."

 The "Horsetrack" brand of the old-time Horsetrack Cattle Co. of Calgary.

CATTLE BRANDS IN ALBERTA



Cattle brands in Alberta are now registered in six positions; the shoulder, rib and hip, on the right or left side of the animal. Except in the cases of a few registered old-time brands, quarter circles must have points away from other characters   , and half diamonds must have points toward the other characters   . It is also usual to depict the letter "G" as Reversed  , to distinguish it from the regular "C".

All brands must be renewed by their owners every four years. If they lapse, the brand is open for registry again. In other cases, a brand may be passed down through the years with the ranch to whom it has always belonged. Today there are approximately 35 to 40

thousand brands registered in the Province alone. You can judge from this how important a brand book is for identifying cattle, on the range, or in the stockyard.

Stories are still told of ranchers who receive cheques for cattle they never even knew they had! This comes about when a calf running with a cow on the range is picked up at roundup time and, according to the unwritten law of the cattleman, is branded with the same brand as the cow. Later the calf is shipped to market and the cheque for its sale sent to the registered brand owner.

Many an old brand runs today as it did almost a hundred years ago — but as ever, the language of brands is a living language — changing, growing, developing. No wonder the brand book is the cattleman's bible — a printed history and a daily working tool !

TOP BRAND
IN
REFRESHMENT



Made from the famous House of Lethbridge formula
SICKS' LETHBRIDGE BREWERY LTD.

